

# — The Mystery of — THE CRYSTAL SKULL

*Where did this  
artefact come  
from?*

*Who made it?*

*How was it  
made?*

*What was its  
purpose?*

**by Richard Giles**

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**A**nna Mitchell-Hedges was just seventeen years old and on a dig with her adoptive father, F. A. "Mike" Mitchell-Hedges, in British Honduras (now known as Belize) in Central America. They were excavating at the lost city of Lubaantun in the jungles near the present capital, Belize City, when they made a momentous discovery.

The word *Lubaantun* means "place of the fallen stones" in the local Mayan dialect. Its existence was first reported to the British colonial government in the late 19th century by inhabitants from the nearby Toledo settlement. In 1903 the Governor of British Honduras commissioned Dr Thomas Gann to investigate the site.

Dr Gann explored and excavated around the central plaza area and concluded that the place must have had a large population. He published his report in the United Kingdom the following year.

In 1915, R. Merwin of Harvard University also investigated the area. He discovered three carved stone markers depicting two men playing ball games, and also excavated a ball court.

Mitchell-Hedges arrived at the site in 1924 with an expedition including Dr Gann, Mitchell-Hedges' daughter Anna, and Lady Richmond-Brown, his close companion and financier. They worked there for three years sifting, digging and uncovering material on site at Lubaantun.

## DISCOVERY OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL

It was Anna's 17th birthday, and while helping with the digging around a collapsed altar she spied a glinting object in the earth. With a great deal of effort, the Mayan workers assisting at the site removed the last of the debris of stone slabs that lay in the way, and then Anna managed to remove the object. To her delight, what she picked up was a gleaming life-sized crystal skull in perfect condition.

According to the account by Alice Bryant and Phyllis Galde in *The Message of The Crystal Skull*, the Mayan workers went wild with joy when they saw it. They began to dance, and some started to pay homage to the sacred relic. Within a short space of time they had erected an altar to support the Skull for worshipping.

As the story goes, the workers planned to suspend their digging work for several days due to their celebrating. Mitchell-Hedges was in a bind about what to do, wanting them back at work on the site, yet acknowledging that what had been found was important to them. He made the extraordinarily generous offer to present the Skull to the chief of the Mayan workers if they would return to the task. They readily agreed to return, and the next day were back at work.

Around two months later they found the detachable lower jawbone. It was then that Mitchell-Hedges and his party realised what an incredible find they had. The crystal jaw, too, was in perfect condition.

When Mitchell-Hedges' expedition finally was to return home in 1927, the Mayans presented the Skull to him in gratitude for the benefits they had received.

Why was this so important to Mitchell-Hedges? As a boy, he disliked school and wanted to be an explorer. He was fascinated by tales of ancient cultures, especially of Central America. The Mayans, the Aztecs and the Toltecs were his realm.

Later, as an adult, he accumulated a personal fortune yet he was less interested in this than in his search for answers about ancient civilisations. He believed strongly in the legends of Atlantis and thought he would find traces of the civilisation in Central America.

"Mike" Mitchell-Hedges was born in England in 1882, and by the time he turned seventeen had left for the United States. After winning a large sum of money in a card game,

he took off for Mexico where, according to David Hatcher Childress in his book, *Lost Cities of North & Central America*, he was captured by Pancho Villa but eventually joined up with him.

Mitchell-Hedges later explored the islands off Honduras and around Jamaica. The artefacts he found underwater convinced him that a high civilisation had existed there in the past. He concluded it was related to Atlantis. A theosophist and lover of the mystical sciences, F. A. Mitchell-Hedges had much to do with secret societies.

### CRYSTAL SKULDUGGERY

This fascination with secret societies and mysteries prompted some sceptics to write that Anna Mitchell-Hedges never found the Crystal Skull. It was claimed that "Mike" Mitchell-Hedges placed it there for his daughter to find, and had really obtained it during a secret rite years before; he had to have some way to explain his possession of it, so he placed it in the rubble for his adopted daughter to find.

Another story among the sceptics to the Mitchell-Hedges' find is from Joe Nickells of the University of Kentucky, USA. This is mentioned in the book, *Arthur C. Clarke's A-Z of Mysteries*, where authors Simon Welfare and John Fairley write that Nickells suggested Mitchell-Hedges actually bought the Skull at an auction at Sotheby's in London in 1943 after it failed to sell. Nickells argued that he liked to be seen as a "swashbuckling character" and made up the Lubaantun story to suit his image.

Regardless of how it was found, the Crystal Skull is one of the most extraordinary artefacts to be discovered this century. The method of manufacture and its purpose are a complete mystery.

Mitchell-Hedges had it in his possession from 1927 until his death in 1959. It was passed on to Anna to keep under her watchful eye up to the present day. In 1964 she lent it to leading international art conservators Frank and Mabel Dorland, who knew Mitchell-Hedges from 1950. The Dorlands had an established reputation in art conservation and restoration—particularly religious art—among museums and cultural institutes worldwide. In the 1960s their laboratories were considered to be the finest in the western United States, according to Alice Bryant.

Frank Dorland had pioneered a revolutionary wax restoration technique that was regarded as the best in the field. And with the Dorlands having particular expertise in religious art restoration, Anna believed they would be well-placed to conduct further studies. When Anna brought the Crystal Skull and another treasure, The Black Virgin of Kazan, to the New York City World Fair in 1964, she decided that the Skull should return with them for investigation. The Dorlands had the Russian icon in their care in 1962 when Anna forwarded it to them for authentication.

### NEW LIGHT

Frank Dorland was now able to subject the Crystal Skull to his thorough examination process at his own pace. It had intrigued him since his first contact with it in the early 1950s. This was a piece of work, an ancient artefact that had no history, no legends, no myths surrounding it, and no historical reference to track down to give him starting clues—a fantastic challenge for one of the world's leading art conservators!

Dorland began by photographing it from every angle. He subjected it to microscopic analysis through a binocular microscope which gave him a 3D view of the Skull. One evening, the work had gone on too late to return the Skull to the vault where it was kept at the nearby Mill Valley Bank. Dorland noticed that as it sat on the table in front of the fire, the eyes were refracting the fire

exactly as it appeared in the grate. He began to examine it more minutely and found that an amazing set of optical properties had been carved into the Skull.

Halfway back in the roof of the mouth there is a broad plane which acts like a 45-degree prism. This directs light from beneath the Skull into the eye-sockets. This means that if the Skull were placed on an altar with a concealed light below it, the light would be visible through the eyes as if being within the eyes. A fire projected through the eyes in this way would create an extraordinary flickering light-show which would deeply impress anyone not knowing these optical properties.

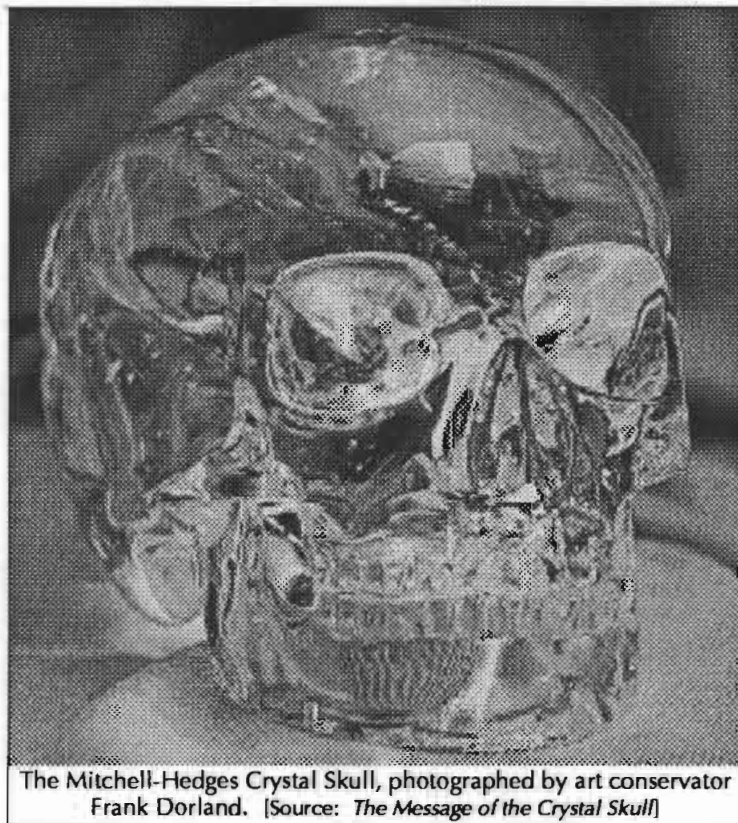
There is also a thin ribbon-like surface next to the plane that acts like a magnifying glass. Behind the prism are convex and concave surfaces that gather light and direct it

out through the eye-sockets. The back of the Skull also acts as a camera lens, gathering light from behind itself and projecting it through the eyes.

Another unusual aspect is that the zygomatic arches carved next to the cheekbones have a narrow space of crystal material removed from them, so as to allow light from behind or underneath to flow through and into the eyes again, producing startling effects. If a person or light source behind were to be moved about or flickered, astounding optical images could be observed from in front. If what was happening behind the Skull were hidden from viewers in front, the images would appear to be emanating from the Skull itself.

Frank Dorland also found two holes—one at each side of the base, and invisible when the Skull stands upright—which support it at a perfect balance point so that it can be rocked back and forth without toppling over. The jawbone (which, as pointed out, was found separately) fits perfectly into two polished sockets, and the top of the Skull can be made to move up and down on the jaw and vice versa.

In December 1970, Dorland took the Skull for testing at the



The Mitchell-Hedges Crystal Skull, photographed by art conservator Frank Dorland. [Source: *The Message of the Crystal Skull*]

Hewlett-Packard Laboratories in Santa Clara, California—at the time, the world leader in electronics and computers. The lab was expert in the production of precision quartz crystals used in oscillators and quartz crystal thermometers, which involves cutting and shaping quartz crystal wafers to vibrate at a precise frequency.

In one major test, the lab technicians first submerged the Skull in a bath of index-matching benzyl alcohol. They then viewed it under polarised light to determine whether it was cut from one chunk of quartz, and also to find out the angle it was cut in relation to the natural axis of the crystal.

This test confirmed that the Skull and the jawbone were cut from one single piece of quartz—a piece of rare size and quality. According to Alice Bryant, the staff at the Hewlett-Packard Laboratories were very excited to be able to examine such an amazing piece. The Skull's exquisite workmanship and high-shine finish made it look as if it had been cut yesterday.

Hewlett-Packard lab experts concurred that, given a crystal of the same size, they, the foremost producers of quality cut quartz in the world, could not produce a skull of comparable quality.

Frank Dorland himself had the Crystal Skull in his possession for six years. During that time, he managed to subject it to every known scientific and non-destructive test he could conceive of and that was available to him. He concluded that even with the advanced technology available to us today, it would be nearly impossible to carve as extraordinary an object as the Mitchell-Hedges Skull.

#### WHO MADE THE CRYSTAL SKULL?

Fascinating ideas, theories and speculations abound as to the Skull's origins. In *Arthur C. Clarke's A-Z of Mysteries*, several 'explanations' are offered. G. Morant, in a journal called *Man* (July 1936, Royal Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland), published the results of his detailed examinations of the Mitchell-Hedges Skull and the British Museum Skull (see later), concluding that both were European in shape; however, he did not dismiss the possibility that they could have come from South America.

Commenting on Morant's findings, Adrian Digby of the British Museum cautioned at the time that it would be "extremely rash to suggest that either skull was of European rather than Mexican manufacture". H. J. Braunholtz, during this 1936 debate, suggested that the Mitchell-Hedges Skull was a good example of Mexican art and typical of Aztec craftsmanship.

Gemmologist Allan Jobbins who examined the two skulls for *Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World* in 1980, said that the most likely source of the quartz was Brazil, but suggested it could have been worked in the Honduras, Mexico, Japan, China or anywhere—he did not know where. Frank Dorland put forward the proposal that the crystal from which the Skull is carved matches crystal from Cavalaveras County, California.

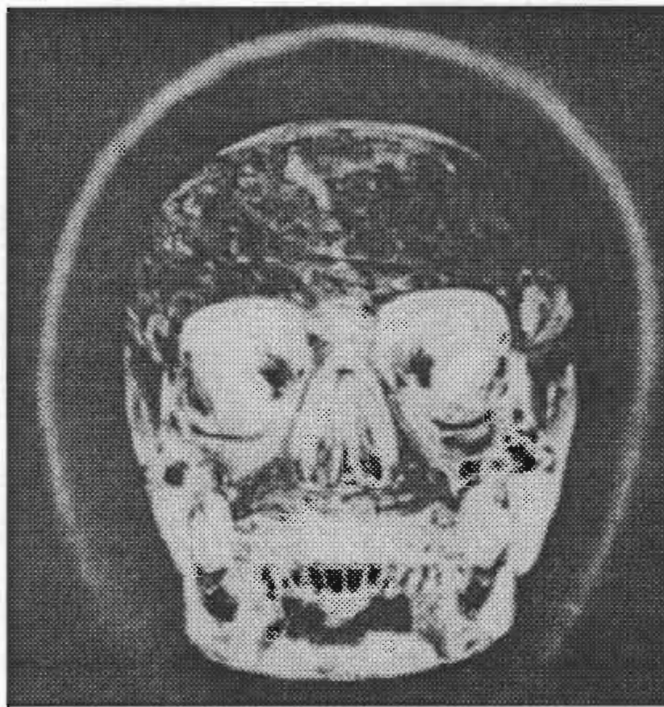
David H. Childress, in his book referred to earlier, reports that the Hewlett-Packard Laboratories estimated that the Skull would have required a minimum 300 years' work to be carved by a succession of extremely gifted artisans. Since rock quartz is rated at 7 on Mohs' Scale of hardness (diamond is 10), it would take centuries of work to produce a skull of such quality.

#### THE ATLANTIS CONNECTION

Childress goes on to suggest one theory that the Skull is a 12,000-year-old Atlantean relic handed down through the Knights Templar, eventually coming into the possession of the inner circle of the Masonic Lodge. It is also alleged that Mitchell-Hedges was an inner circle Mason, and theory has it that he somehow acquired the Skull and then planted it the Lubaantun ruin some time between 1924 and 1926. Another possibility is that the Skull was looted from a Mexican ancient city site, and Mitchell-Hedges bought it as a stolen artefact, hiding his purchase by planting it in the ruins.

F. A. Mitchell-Hedges, in his autobiography, *Danger My Ally* (1954), claims that the Skull is 3,600 years old and was used by the High Priests of Maya when performing esoteric rites. He suggests that the Skull could have been used to 'will' death. It was often referred to as the "Skull of Doom" by newspapers of the 1930s and '40s. Sensationalism was big in newspapers of the time, and Mitchell-Hedges appeared to relish promoting it. Interestingly enough, Childress points out, Mitchell-Hedges survived three knife attacks and eight bullet-wounds by the time of his death at 77 years!

In the book, *Mysteries of the Crystal Skulls Revealed!!* (Bowen, Nocerino and Shapiro), a number of trance sessions are reported with people involved in Crystal Skull research, on the origins of the



The Crystal Skull halo effect, simulated by Frank Dorland. [Source: *The Message of The Crystal Skull* (Bryant & Galde)]

Mitchell-Hedges Skull and other skulls. An excerpt from Anna Mitchell-Hedges' book, *The Skull Speaks*, is included, quoting a channelled communication from the trance medium Carole Davis. The channel revealed that the Skull had originated in Atlantis and had been on Earth for 17,000 years. Its true origin was part of the Great Crystals of Atlantis, and within it are locked the secrets to healing, weather, the power for growth, controlling personality, comforting and awakening. Light refracted through the artefact becomes power, the message said.

In an interview in the same book, F. R. "Nick" Nocerino suggests that the Mitchell-Hedges Skull is one of 13 skulls, only some of which have been discovered. The Mitchell-Hedges Skull is the clearest and the purest yet found.

Joshua Shapiro, in another chapter, proposes that the creators of the Skull were a superior race of beings who are still here on the Earth and who may have been here for a very long time, possibly millions of years.

Michael Kant claims in an interview that the Skull was originally located in one of the thirteen healing temples of Atlantis. It is of a female, the priestess "Sha-Tree-Tra", who was killed during

one of the last earthquakes in Atlantis. Her skull was transmuted into crystal through a process Kant calls "morphocrystallic transformation". The spirit of the woman is no longer with the Skull. The actual transformation work, he says, was done by seven Atlantean priests who still have the ability to project their consciousness into it at any time.

This proposition is interesting because of the forensic work done with the Crystal Skull in 1986. Francis Joseph, a freelance historical writer, learned of the Skull while researching lowland Mayan civilisations.

Joseph decided to attempt to reconstruct the face from photographs of the Skull, working on the assumption that the object was from a real human skull. Then, he hoped to be able to identify the race of the person who modelled for it. He contacted Dr Peggy Caldwell, consulting forensic anthropologist for the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, who was keen to assist.

With the help of Detective Frank Dominigo, composite artist with the New York Police, she came up with a face from a plaster model and photos of the Skull.

The face was that of a young woman, 17 to 20 years of age with Oriental/Mongoloid features. Francis Joseph suggested she was of royal lineage in the early Mesoamerican civilisations of the period.

#### EXPERIENCES WITH THE CRYSTAL SKULL

In some special way not yet really understood by those who experience it, the Crystal Skull has profound effects on many of those who see it or dwell in its presence. Frank and Mabel Dorland, for example, who had the Skull in their keeping for six years, drank neither alcohol nor coffee, nor did they smoke tobacco while researching the Skull. In fact, they both became vegetarians under its influence.

People experience all sorts of reactions to the Skull: some become short of breath, others start to fall asleep, while many find their hearts pounding and blood racing.

At various times, Frank Dorland saw a halo surround the Skull about 18 inches from its surface lasting for six minutes, and lights and colours appear inside. He also witnessed entire scenes—including temples and other skull images—reproduce themselves within the Skull. Sometimes he saw a dark spot appear and grow in intensity. The sounds of small bells and the voices of humans in a choir-like effect have been heard emanating from the Skull.

On one occasion, several people visiting the Dorlands organised a special meditation where the lights were all dimmed and a small light placed underneath the Skull. As they watched, the forehead of the Skull began to go milky; then a dark spot appeared at one temple which grew in size until a large part of the central mass of the Skull just disappeared. The outline was there but the centre of the Skull was gone. Comparing notes afterwards, they all agreed each had seen much the same effect.

Alice Bryant, co-author of the book, *The Message of the Crystal Skull*, saw the artefact in 1986 after a nine-year absence and was immediately overcome. Her hands shook, her breath became short and a strong rush of emotion overtook her which brought up all her memories of searching for answers about the Skull. Lasting more than an hour, the experience left her physically and mentally shaken.

The Skull also seems to have a way of making thoughts become

reality in an instant. This true story from Michael Roads, author of *Journey Into Oneness* (see extract and review, *NEXUS* 2/19) illustrates a very funny but embarrassing side to this. Roads tells of a Canadian man and his wife, she being into 'new age' philosophies and he not. She'd wanted to see the Crystal Skull for a long time, and the opportunity came when it was brought to Toronto for a special viewing. He agreed to accompany his wife to the show.

The viewing of the Skull was preceded by a talk, slide show and video. As each of these unfolded, the husband kept thinking to himself, "Boring, boring, boring!" while sitting through what seemed interminable presentations. At last they got to where the Skull was uncovered for viewing, and all present lined up to file past it.

By this time he was bored out of his brain, and as he reached the Skull and looked at it, he thought to himself, "What a load of crap!" Within seconds of the thought, his bowels just opened up

and filled his pants. He had no control. Overcome with embarrassment and shock, he pulled down his parka as far as he could and, excusing himself, waddled over to the toilet to clean himself up.

It was then he remembered one of his wife's friends saying to watch what you think in the presence of the Skull. He said afterwards, though he still could not understand what the Skull was all about, he now had tremendous respect for its power.

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#### SPECIAL EFFECTS

Joshua Shapiro, in *Mysteries of the Crystal Skulls Revealed!!*, reports on his experiences with the Skull at crystal conferences. He viewed a face inside it that was actually the face of someone living who was using the Skull to communicate. Others at the conference saw such things as dragons, buildings, underwater scenes, strange creatures and faces.

Shapiro speculates that the Skull, or the consciousness that works through it, seems to hook into the person viewing the Skull, producing images or effects that are most needed in that person's life. He also suggests that the Skull is presenting us with alternative realities, thus encouraging us to look beyond the conventional explanations for physical and universal laws. All of this implies some sort of consciousness resides within the Skull or is perhaps operating through it from somewhere else.

Shapiro also points out that the effects which show up on film, video and photographs are sometimes different from those seen if one is looking directly at the Skull. Cameras and video camcorders seem to pick up images in the Skull that are invisible to the naked eye. On videotapes recorded when Anna Mitchell-Hedges and Nick Nocerino presented the Skull on cable TV, there were images visible in the Skull which could not be seen by the unaided eye.

The Crystal Skull reportedly has had some extraordinary impacts on people when they encounter it or if they associate with it over long periods of time.

What is the reason for the amazing effects of a piece of carved rock quartz on human beings, and how long will it be before we have a full understanding of the Skull's origin and purpose?

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### OTHER CRYSTAL SKULLS

Nocerino lists a number of skulls known to exist around the world. The other well-known one is in the Museum of Mankind in London and is referred to as the British Museum Skull or sometimes the Aztec Skull. It was first recorded in the 1890s at Tiffany, the New York jeweller, from where it was eventually sent to London.

The Amethyst Skull, made of pure amethyst, is presently in a collection in San Jose, California. The Paris Skull, also referred to as the Aztec Skull, is kept in a collection in France.

There is the Zulu Skull—the so-called "Skull of Doom"—which is also reported to have a movable jaw. Stolen from the Zulus, its current whereabouts are a mystery. When Mitchell-Hedges took the Crystal Skull to Africa, local Africans mistook it for the "Skull of Doom".

The Berlin Skull, in Gestapo possession during World War II, remained hidden in Berlin until the mid-1980s before supposedly being taken to Italy, perhaps to the Vatican. Its present location is also unknown.

Nocerino mentions the Southern France Skull, also called the "Skull of the Light of Christ". He saw it in the 1940s by accident and discovered it has connections with the Knights Templar. Reputed to be guarded by a society known as The Light of Christ, its location in France is now hidden.

There is the Masai Skull which was stolen from the fierce African Masai people and is still missing. Another, the Mayan Skull, was looted from a tomb in Guatemala and is now in a private vault in Texas. The last on record is the Rose Quartz Skull which, along with the Mitchell-Hedges Skull, Nocerino regards as the finest and purest yet found. Though somewhere around Mexico or Guatemala, its exact location can't be pinpointed.

All of these skulls were carved some considerable time ago. Other skulls around in the world are recent, some only a few years old. Nocerino considers none of the new ones to have the power of the Mitchell-Hedges or Rose Quartz Skulls. He suggests that if all the older skulls were put together in one place, you'd have a vast computer-like bank of information available for access. Their combined power would be immense, perhaps affecting the

entire planet!

NEXUS would appreciate feedback from readers able to update this information—especially on new locations of any of these skulls or the discovery or appearance of new ones.

Meanwhile, it's clear that the degree of craftsmanship and technical knowledge possessed by the creators of some of these skulls—especially the Mitchell-Hedges Skull—is still beyond what we have today. The implications for understanding our origins are profound. ∞

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